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News Release



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U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE AWARDS OVER \$1.6 MILLION IN GRANTS TO PACIFIC REGION TRIBES FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION PROJECTS

Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton today announced that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is awarding 79 grants, totaling nearly \$14 million, to help 60 federally recognized Indian tribes conserve and recover endangered, threatened and at-risk species and other wildlife on tribal lands.

In its Pacific Region, the Service is awarding over \$1.6 million to 8 tribes in Idaho, Washington and Oregon for 10 projects.

The Service is awarding the grants under two new cost-share programs, the Tribal Landowner Incentive Program (TLIP) and Tribal Wildlife Grant Program (TWG). These programs are similar to cost-share programs recently developed by the department to assist states, local communities, private landowners and other partners undertake wildlife conservation projects.

This is the first year for these tribal grants programs. However, last year the department provided \$34.8 million in grants to states under the new Landowner Incentive Program to assist private landowners in conserving and restoring the habitat of endangered species and other at-risk plants and animals on their property. The program was modeled after a successful program implemented by President Bush in Texas when he was governor.

“Native Americans have a unique relationship to and understanding of the land and its wildlife,” Norton said. “As part of the President’s overall Cooperative Conservation Initiative, the Interior Department is providing these grants to build on our partnership with the tribes to conserve tribal land and recover the wildlife, especially those species that are in decline.”

Of the \$14 million, the Service is providing about \$4 million to federally recognized Indian tribes to help fund 23 projects under TLIP. The grants were chosen through a competitive process to address tribal needs for the protection, restoration, and management of habitat to benefit at-risk species, including federally listed endangered or threatened species and proposed or candidate species.

The maximum award under this program is \$200,000 with a required minimum 25 percent match from non-federal funds.

Meanwhile, about \$10 million will help fund 56 projects under TWG. These grants are awarded to federally recognized Indian tribes to benefit fish, wildlife, and their habitat including non-game species. Although matching funds are not required for these grants, they are considered to be an indicator of a tribe's commitment. The maximum grant award under this program is \$250,000.

"Indian peoples were North America's first stewards," said Fish and Wildlife Service Director Steve Williams. "For generations, they have lived close to nature, depending on wildlife for economic, cultural, and spiritual fulfillment. The Service, through these two special grant programs, will strengthen its conservation partnerships with tribes across the United States on behalf of traditionally important wildlife species and their habitat."

Indians and Indian tribes have a controlling interest in more than 52 million acres of tribal trust lands and in an additional 40 million acres held by Alaska native corporations.

"Indian country harbors vast pristine habitats, marked by a representation of an entire continental array of fish and wildlife species," said Ira New Breast, executive director of the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society. "The two Service grant programs will work to further raise the capacity of Indian people to meet the dynamic challenges facing sustainable Tribal management of this country's fish and wildlife resources."

"The grant awards that we announce today result from tribal partnerships that are a keystone in the foundation of resource management," said Dave Allen, regional director for the service's Pacific Region. "Tribal efforts to identify resource needs initiated a process that brings over \$1.3 million to our region to benefit tribal fish and wildlife resources. I commend tribal administrators and biologists working cooperatively with Service biologists and Bureau of Indian Affairs personnel. They have set the standard for future funding opportunities."

Tribal Wildlife Grants awarded in the Pacific Region for 2003 are:

<u>Klamath Tribe, Chiloquin, OR</u> Mule Deer Distribution, Habitat Use and Population Project	\$50,000
<u>Nez Perce Tribe, Lapwai, ID</u> Developing Monitoring Protocol	\$236,310
<u>Nooksack Tribe, Deming, WA</u> Nooksack Cumulative Watershed Effects Assessment South Fork Nooksack In-Stream Restoration Project	\$204,000
<u>Puyallup Tribe, Tacoma, WA</u> Mount Rainier National Park and South Rainier Elk Herd Study	\$166,147

<u>Quileute Tribe, LaPush, WA</u> Population, Harvest Numbers and Health Survey of Roosevelt Elk in Quileute Treaty Area	\$75,019
<u>Sauk-Suiattle Tribe, Darrington, WA</u> Cooperative Mountain Goat Habitat Modeling and Habitat Use and Sighting Surveys	\$172,724
<u>Yakama Tribe, Toppenish, WA</u> Survey and Groundwork for the Yakama Reservation Wildlife Management Plan	\$249,720

Tribal Landowner Incentive Program Grants awarded in the Pacific Region for 2003 are:

<u>Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation, Pendleton, OR</u> Umatilla River Floodplain Habitat Acquisition	\$150,000
<u>Nooksack Tribe, Deming, WA</u> South Fork Nooksack Phase I Instream Restoration Project	\$200,000
<u>Yakama Nation, Toppenish, WA</u> Shrub-Steppe Rehabilitaion and Management Plan	\$199,841